Record cold December 2010

5 January 2011 - Provisional figures from the Met Office issued today reveal that December 2010 has become the coldest December across the UK since the national series began in 1910.

The mean temperature for the UK has been -1.0 °C, well below the long term average of 4.2 °C. The previous coldest December in the series was 0.1 °C, in 1981.

The provisional UK, England and Wales figures for December 2010 show that the month was the coldest month since February 1986. In Scotland it was the coldest month since February 1947, and in Northern Ireland the coldest month on record.

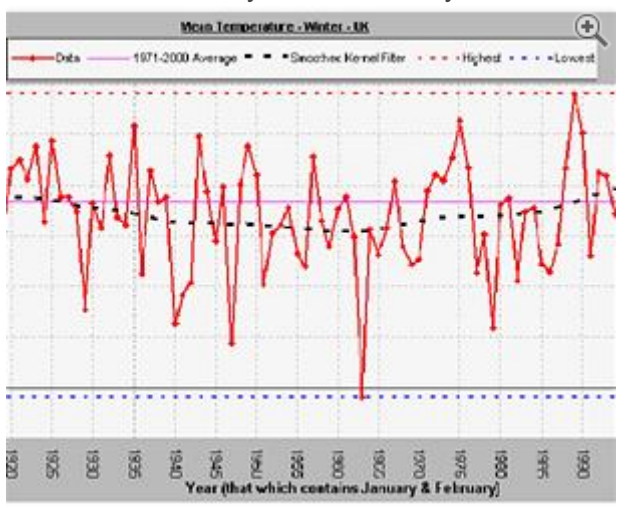
December 2010 saw some exceptionally cold and snowy weather across much of the country, with temperatures quite regularly falling to between -10 and -20 °C overnight. Many places also saw temperatures struggling to get above freezing by day.

In the last 100 years, the UK has experienced five colder months - January 1940, February 1947, January 1963, February 1963 and February 1986.

In November our Chief Meteorologist explained why it had been so cold and snowy

Although it has been very cold and snowy it has also been relatively sunny and dry.

Precipitation (rain and snow) was well below average for the UK, recording just 38% of what is normally expected in December. This makes it the third driest December in the series that goes back to 1910.



UK mean winter temperatures

Sunshine hours were 39% above normal, with an average of 53 hours recorded for the UK, making it the third sunniest in the series that goes back to 1929. Provisionally it was the sunniest December on record across Northern Ireland.

Provisional Dec 2010	Mean temperature (deg C)		Sunshine duration		Precipitation	
	Actual	Difference from normal (71-00)	Actual (hours)	Percentage of normal (71-00) (%)	Actual (mm)	Percentage of normal (71-00) (%)
UK	-1.0	-5.2	53.4	139	47.4	38
England	-0.5	-5.2	52.6	118	34.8	38
Wales	-0.4	-5.2	61.3	159	53.0	31
Scotland	-1.9	-5.0	48.2	167	63.1	37
Northern Ireland	-0.6	-5.4	78.7	232	66.5	56

In 2010 the UK recorded a provisional mean temperature of 8.0 °C, making it the 12th coldest year in the series, that goes back to 1910. Sunshine and rainfall figures for 2010 are provisionally the ninth sunniest and the 10th driest in the respective series.

Provisional 2010	Mean temperature (deg C)		Sunshine duration		Precipitation	
	Actual	Difference from normal (71-00)	Actual (hours)	Percentage of normal (71-00) (%)	Actual (mm)	Percentage of normal (71-00) (%)
UK	8.0	-0.6	1477.2	108	940.1	83
England	8.8	-0.6	1578.7	109	722.2	86
Wales	8.2	-0.7	1612.6	116	1118.3	78
Scotland	6.5	-0.7	1277.3	107	1233.8	81
Northern Ireland	8.0	-0.7	1442.9	116	1047.4	94

Historic records

UK stats for December

- Previous coldest December was in 1981 with a mean temperature of 0.1 °C.
- The driest is 1933 with 32.4 mm.
- The sunniest is 2001 with 64.3 hours.

Annual UK stats

- The coldest is 1919 with a mean temperature of 7.5 °C.
- The driest is 1933 with 835.4 mm.
- The sunniest is 2003 with 1586.8 hours.

England stats for December

- Previous coldest December was in 1981 with a mean temperature of 0.2 °C.
- The driest is 1933 with 21.5 mm.
- The sunniest is 2001 with 75.7 hours.

Annual England stats

- The coldest is 1963 with a mean temperature of 8.0 °C.
- The driest is 1921 with 567.0 mm.
- The sunniest is 2003 with 1746.6 hours.

Wales stats for December

- Previous coldest December was in 1981 with a mean temperature of 0.8 °C.
- The driest is 1926 with 34.0 mm.
- The sunniest is 2001 with 73.5 hours.

Annual Wales stats

- The coldest is 1963 with a mean temperature of 7.6 °C.
- The driest is 1933 with 1015.0 mm.
- The sunniest is 1929 with 1684.3 hours.

Scotland stats for December

- Previous coldest December was in 1981 with a mean temperature of -0.7 °C.
- The driest is 1933 with 40.2 mm.
- The previous sunniest was 2001 with 43.7 hours.

Annual Scotland stats

- The coldest is 1919 with a mean temperature of 6.2 °C.
- The driest is 1933 with 1091.2 mm.
- The sunniest is 1955 with 1456.3 hours.

Northern Ireland stats for December

- Previous coldest December was in 1950 with a mean temperature of 1.4 °C.
- The driest is 1963 with 29.1 mm.
- The previous sunniest was 2001 with 59.8 hours.

Annual Northern Ireland stats

- The coldest is 1979 with a mean temperature of 7.7 °C.
- The driest is 1933 with 784.6 mm.
- The sunniest is 1955 with 1456.2 hours.

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